

THE MOUNTAIN KNOWS MY NAME



MĀUI — THE STORY THAT STARTED IT ALL (II)

Hauiti

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This work is grounded in Ancestral cosmology, oral storytelling traditions, whakapapa, ancestral memory, and sacred land and ocean scapes. The narrative is presented as a work of Indigenous mythical historical fiction shaped through the traditions of oral transmission and cultural storytelling.

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Dedication Page

For the ancestors who carried the burden before us. And for the mokopuna yet to come.

About the Author



Kaiporoporo is the name the ancestors call me by. Hauiti is the name my father, Te Tawiri o te rangi, gave me. Hauiti is a storyteller, researcher, and writer whose work is grounded in whakapapa, ancestral landscapes, oral traditions, and Indigenous knowledge systems.

His narratives draw upon Ancestral cosmology, sacred geography, ritual memory, and intergenerational storytelling traditions to craft epic Indigenous literary worlds rooted in the living relationship between people, ancestors, and whenua.

The MĀUI trilogy serves as the ancestral prologue to the larger Nukuroa saga: it comes

Kaiporoporo Publications: The Mountain Knows My Name

The Birth of a Legacy

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Tuatua mai

Mua woke, feeling a little disoriented. He looked up at the night sky to get his bearings.

‘This doesn’t look good,’ he thought. ‘Nothing looks remotely familiar.’

Searching for a horizon to anchor his rising panic, he turned in every direction, reaching back to his training in the *Whare wānanga*—the Ancient School of Ocean Lore. As he steadied his breathing, the teachings slowly began to surface.

He recognised certain stars.

Sighting along the bow, he let out a breath of relief. *Mābutonga*. There was no mistaking the Southern Cross, though it hung much higher above the horizon than usual. His eyes drifted to the side, confirming the two pointers, *Ngā Whetū Matarau*.

‘Auē,’ he thought, ‘we’re heading further away from our islands.’

Discomfit cramped his mind, and panic followed. He took a slow, deep breath to steady himself.

‘What’s that karakia again? The one to ease anxiety?’

It came. He began chanting to ease his mind:

Tuatua mai

Te Whiwhia mai

Te Rāwea mai

Tūrou parea Tangaroa

I te orooro . . .

. . . he whispered to himself

Panic settled.

Memories of the *Whare Wānanga* surfaced—long winter nights spent under the stars from sundown until midnight. As a deep-sea fisherman, he had been schooled in the Lore of the Oceans, the Moon, and the Stars. Now, those same stars spoke a chilling truth: they were sailing away from home.

But where to?

For an instant he thought about turning the waka around then the thought occurred to him —

‘What are the stars telling us?’

‘Where is the wind taking us?’

He suddenly felt cold. Colder than he was used to. He felt a sense of foreboding —the unknowing.

Not good —but then . . . he mused. The bird?

He shut his eyes against the surge of panic and tilted his head, searching the salt air for a scent of land. The rest of the *karakia* broke from his lips—a frantic whisper at first, then a steady rhythm, repeated until his breath finally levelled out.

I tukituki ai koe

I tātaia ai koe

Ōi Kiri o Tangaroa . . .

It was then that he sensed the subtle change in everything around him. He began to piece together what he could see, what he could sense, and what they had experienced.

He felt a gentle breath on his forehead.

Whaat?

He shook himself.

‘Breathe,’ he whispered, ‘breathe’.

Right —lets piece this together, little by little.

Mābutonga perched well above the horizon told him they were moving away from their islands. The rough seas had to be *Tuahivini-nui-o-Hine-moana*. Some of the Elders had remarked upon it in one the *wānanga* sessions, although none of them had actually experienced it.

The cooling air betrayed their course—they were drifting further south. He wondered if they were bound for the same void where Tamarereti, their great ancestor, had vanished and never returned.

‘This can’t be good,’ he thought.

A subtle tap brushed his forehead. He swivelled his head—left, then right—but saw only emptiness.

‘You are where you are meant to be,’ a voice whispered, quiet yet piercingly clear.

His jaw dropped, and he quickly clamped a hand over his mouth to stifle a cry.

‘Mua —you are exactly where I need you to be.’

He looked up at into the void. “You . . . you know me?”

‘I know you—and your brothers.’

Mua took a shaky breath. “Okay. Okay. *Ab* —now what?”

‘Follow the Koekoeā.’

He waited for more, but the silence returned. He simply nodded, the weight of the command settling over him

‘Signs,’ he thought. The tap, the voice—they had to be signs. Despite the knot in his stomach, Mua decided to hold his course until his brothers awoke. He sat in the silence, trying to convince himself he wasn't dreaming, but the unease remained.

Finally, yielding to exhaustion, he gave Hianga a sharp nudge with his foot to take the watch.

* * *

That is one ugly bird

Hianga woke easily and relieved Mua from the helm. He stretched and yawned loudly. Shook himself vigorously to rid the accumulated stiffness in the body, then settled into the task.

He frowned, and began piecing together the small incidents of the previous day. He had noticed the *Koekoeā* while he was at the helm.

That is one ugly bird, he thought —how does that thing fly?

The *Koekoeā* was a large bird, almost fat, with short legs and a long tail. ‘Although,’ he thought, ‘it looks like it could be quite tasty!’

Then he wondered what it was doing so far from land —but was it? I wonder where it had come from?’

Without hesitation he changed the direction of the waka to where he thought the bird had come from —*that way*, prompted a voice. Daylight is close, he thought.

As night slowly dissipated Mua woke —he instantly noticed the star *Autahi*.

“Little brother,” he said “I see the nose of the waka is facing *Autahi*?”

Autahi was the lone star that their great ancestor Tāne had positioned just outside *Te Mangōroa*, the Milky Way, when he was decorating the breast of the great Heavens. When asked by his father *Ranginui*, the Sky Father, why he did that, Tāne replied, “Father, because of its brightness it was too sacred to sit with all the other stars.”

And that was how the second brightest star in the southern skies had received its name, *Autahi* —to stand alone. He heard some of the Elders call it *Atuatabi* and *Atutahi*. All the same, Mua had thought — it still stood by itself.

“Little brother,” Hianga turned. “Did you see the *Koekoeā*?”

He laughed. “I did.”

Mua smiled to himself, nodding knowingly. He had heard stories about the *Koekoeā*, a bird of passage, that always seemed to pop up out of know where.

Mua had always wondered what distant land it had come from and locked that thought away in the back of his mind.

And now here they were — following the flight path of a bird.

* * *

Petition the spirits of this land

His thoughts returned to the present as the hint of mountains appeared under the distant clouds. “It would appear that the *Koekoeā* may have come from this land ahead.”

While he could not recall any of the stories or songs referring to this distant land, Mua knew they had been guided here and wondered what lay ahead for them.

‘Ancestors’, he said to himself. “Trust them to have a plan. You think they would tell us?”

As they drew closer to land, they saw traces of grey smoke rising in the distance and wondered where that came from.

“Ooh,” said Pae, “perhaps our ancestor Mahuika has relatives here because that clearly looks like the smoke of an angry mountain!”

Hianga’s face heated as he remembered his brush with Mahuika, the Matriarch of Fire. He’d barely escaped with his life when she sent her flames screaming after him—hence the permanent ‘birthmark’ on his backside, as he liked to call it.

His brothers laughed loudly, as they ribbed their little brother about his hasty retreat from Mahuika.

“Perhaps,” called out Taha, “you should not have stolen *te kora o Mahuika*,” referring to “the spark of Mahuika” —the fire Hianga had stolen from the Fire Matriarch.

“Indeed, little brother,” chimed in Pae, “*Kia tūpato e Hianga, kei kaingia tō kiri haepapa e te kora o Mahuika!*” Be careful Hianga lest your flesh be scorched by the Fires of Mahuika!

“*Āe* little brother,” added Roto, “I think the old Matriarch has sent her fire under the Oceans to tickle your ass again with her wrath!”

Hianga blushed, as they all roared with laughter —rubbing his backside.

While his eyes drank in the vista, Mua’s mind was elsewhere. He glanced toward Roto, a frown deepening as a cold shiver traced the length of his spine. The air had changed — something ominous was closing in.

“Roto,” he beckoned for his brother to come closer. “Petition the Spirits of this land and ask if we can come ashore.”

Roto invoked the ancient *Uruuru Whenua* he had learnt at the *Whare Wānanga* — the ritual of encounter that would connect them to the Spirit guardians of the land. If received, they would be granted safe passage.

Tēnei au e IO ē

He invoked, as he stood, raising his head heavenward. Quietly, almost with a whisper, he continued weaving words into his breath:

He uri tipua

He tamhito

He uri atua,

He uri nōu e Io ē

*Here I stand, O IO —the Creator
Born of the ancient line,
of the First Ancestors,
of the Sacred Descent Lines —
all from thee, O IO.*

He took a deep breath, then invoked the next stanza of the *Uruuru Whenua*:

Ka ū, ka ū, ka ū mai ki Mata-nuku

Ka ū, ka ū, ka ū mai ki Mata-rangi

Ka ū, ka ū, ka ū mai ki Mata-moana

Ka ū ki tenei whenua hei whenua

Hei whenua anō ki ēnei uri mokopuna nōu e IO

Māu e kai nei I te manawa o ēnei mokopuna

O ēnei tauhou nō tawhiti.

Haumai ki roto . . . Hautina!

I arrive to this place of unknown land beneath me

I arrive to this place with unknown sky above

I arrive to this place with unknown waters below

I arrive to this land, as a resting place for me

As a resting place for these descendants of thine

On behalf of my brothers,

I greet thee, O Spirits of this unknown place

We beseech thee, O Spirits of the Lands,

Permit us entry into thy domain

Roto turned to Mua, “Brother, we need to establish the *Tūāhu*.”

Scanning the shoreline he noticed a river pouring out. “Perhaps there,” he pointed, “there must be rocks there”, he said. Mua nodded, then turned to Pae.

“Pae, find out what that smoke is. I have a bad feeling about it, and I won’t have us tangled in a web of darkness with no way out.”

Pae nodded solemnly. The urgency in Mua’s voice rippled through the crew, leaving a cold wake of dread behind it.

“Find out what’s there,” Mua said quietly.

Pae closed his eyes and entered the Spirit realm.

The Mountain watched —waiting.

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